

Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.

Benevolence Vs. selfishness

"Giving to others' basic needs without having as my motive personal reward."

Tips for Parents to Encourage Benevolence

As with most character qualities, benevolence is best taught as your children observe benevolence in you. As they see you give to those in need around you, even sacrificially, and hear you show concern for others, they will develop that "grit" in their own assessment of situations. It will become a life-style of thinking of others first.

- When challenging circumstances arise in your lives, use them to create sensitivity to others going through similar circumstances, perhaps in a more extreme form.
- When you here of people going through a difficult time, talk with your children about ways to help meet their needs and attempt to help in whatever way you can as a family.
- Design a family project in which some privileges can be sacrificed in order to be able to meet the need of someone outside the family.
- Encourage your children to save some of their allowance, or to earn extra money, to be able to help with a need you are aware of.
- Read stories together about people's extreme benevolence (biographies such as Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's tutor, or Andrew Carnegie). Notice stories in current magazines or newspapers of extreme giving and collect those. Perhaps you could talk about them at dinner time.
- Encourage your children periodically to go through clothing and toys and books to choose items to give away.

"Caring for others in their greatest times of need is the ultimate test - and glory - of benevolence."

-- Character First



Benevolence Chart

Make an iceberg on poster board by coloring with light blue, spraying with adhesive, and sprinkling with sugar or salt. Add some cotton batting or cotton balls pulled apart to simulate snow.

Cut out the penguin from the coloring page and photo copy to make multiple images.

Every time your child shows benevolence by showing awareness of the needs of others, expressing a desire to give to those in need, or sacrificially taking care of the needs of another person, let him color another penguin, put his name on it, and place it with a little roll of tape on the back of it onto the iceberg.

An addition to this chart could be adding pictures of your "heroes of benevolence"-- people you know or have read about who were benevolent.